

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**July 13, 2009**

City of Chula Vista, Council Chambers  
276 Fourth Avenue

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** By Vice Chair Gilgun at 4:37 p.m.

**ROLL CALL/MOTION TO EXCUSE**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice Chair Gilgun, Commissioners Cory, Mosolgo, Rahimzadeh, and Ulloa

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chair Stillman and Commissioner Reid

**STAFF PRESENT:** Conservation & Environmental Services Director Meacham, Environmental Resource Manager Reed, Sr. Secretary Fields

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

None

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**INFORMATION ITEMS:**

None

**ACTION ITEMS**

**1. EPA Showcase Grant Application**

Environmental Resource Manager Reed gave an update to the Commission on a grant application that he is preparing to submit to the Environmental Protection Agency. The application is in response to the EPA Climate Showcase Communities Grant Program's Request for Proposals. The EPA is seeking to award 20 – 30 grants of up to \$500,000. The main focus of the grant program is to create living showcases of carbon reduction programs in local government and communities. Their primary objective is that there be tangible greenhouse gas emissions reductions out of a project, and that it can be replicated in other communities. In response to that, staff has prepared a proposal for just over \$470,000 for our Carbon Light Neighborhood Project. This project proposes going into two or more neighborhoods, up to 25 homes each, to completely retrofit participating homeowners' properties with energy-efficiency, water conservation, and some renewable energy measures. Additionally, to complement those property improvements, we would be doing some

neighborhood infrastructure improvements such as replacing street lights with more energy efficient technology, as well as planting more shade trees along the street.

The goal is to create a dynamic showcase of what a carbon-light community would look like. It's a marketing tool that we would be able to use for the City's broader Home Upgrade, Carbon Downgrade Program. Conservation & Environmental Services Director Meacham added that this grant program asks residents to do more than that program does. It asks residents to do things like become ambassadors to the rest of the city to promote the program. It also asks them to take care of their trees. If they get a street tree in front of their home, we'll be asking them to maintain that tree for 3 – 5 years while the tree is developing and growing. One of the others things we'll be asking residents to do, if we adopt the street tree approach as opposed to the front yard tree approach, is to voluntarily agree to participate in the tree maintenance district to establish trees in their neighborhood. This would be the first time we've ever done that in western Chula Vista, but it could set a precedent and provide an opportunity for a long-range method of funding a tree program on the west side of the city.

Additionally, we will be asking people to compete in a contest to be one of the two blocks that are selected, which is not only a good marketing strategy, but we'll be creating green jobs and producing that large-scale greenhouse gas reduction, as well as focusing on behavior approaches residents take to work together as a community in managing energy conservation and water conservation. Staff will come up with the final criteria to judge which blocks are selected, and the Commission, with assistance from the Councilmembers who work on climate change, will make the final recommendation to Council as to which two blocks in the city are selected.

Commissioner Rahimzadeh asked about commission members participating in the program as a means to set an example. He also voiced concern about getting 25 neighbors in one block to agree on, what he considered, one very limited project. He suggested possibly 10. Director Meacham indicated that if the group thinks it appropriate, it could be written as "up to 25" with the preference being an entire block. Regarding commission members participating, Director Meacham responded that they would need to consult with the City Attorney's Office, but he believed that in that vote, participating committee members would need to recuse themselves.

Commissioner Cory voiced a preference for doing outreach to the westside where the older homes are because she felt we'd get more bang for our buck and make more of an observable difference in the community there rather than working with newer homes on the eastside. She also agreed that trying to get blocks of people committed is a daunting issue, but she stated that if we could get one person on the block who is a leader in that block, then that person could act as a point person to persuade other residents. She also indicated that if it were desirable for the commission to act as ambassadors, she would be willing to do that.

Commissioner Mosolgo asked staff to go over the metrics by which the program would be judged. He also asked about water efficiency and if there had been any thought on the installation of gray water systems. Director Meacham responded that we would be very excited about adding them, but until we have some kind of a regulatory framework to get our Building Dept. to approve, it's a little bit challenging. Regarding the program criteria, Director Meacham stated that staff was working on the criteria and would bring something in writing to the board to review. Manager Reed added that they would be notified in September on whether they would receive the funding, and at that time, they would go into more detail about the criteria.

Commissioner Ulloa asked if the homes participating in the program had to be owner occupied, or if they could be rentals. Director Meacham responded that if they were not owner-occupied, they would just need the owner's approval. Commissioner Ulloa also asked regarding tree planting whether the City was looking to partner with the People for Trees organization. Director Meacham responded that the organization had been copied on much of the information, and that they would continue to do that.

In agreement with previous comments, Vice Chair Gilgun echoed concern about getting 25 homes in one neighborhood to participate. She suggested possibly looking at 4 - 5 neighborhoods to come up with the proposed 50 homes in order to give some flexibility in case finding 50 homes in just two neighborhoods proved difficult. Environmental Resource Manager Reed responded that there would be flexibility in the number of neighborhoods that might participate, and that staff would add language that would ensure that, if it was not already noted.

ACTION: Commissioner Cory made a motion to approve the staff recommendation. Commissioner Rahimzadeh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 2. Chapter 20 Ordinance Solar Amendments

Environmental Resource Manager Reed presented the staff report. In the Chula Vista Municipal Code, Chapter 20 is where we capture energy-related regulations and policies. Out of the Climate Change Working Group's seven measures, Measure #5 included a request or recommendation to update the City's existing pre-plumbing ordinance for solar hot water, which would require all new residential units to be pre-plumbed for solar hot water. The recommendation also included adding a regulation that all new residential units be pre-wired for solar photovoltaic. The City's building officials brought the technical requirements of those two recommendations to Council back in January and they were adopted and were updated in the City's Municipal Code under the plumbing and electrical sections. So what this agenda item does is align those changes with Chapter 20 in the Municipal Code, which is more like the policy framework for those changes.

Additional, we updated some the definitions that were included in the beginning section of the chapter. This is to update Council with more recent terminology and to make sure that we clarify any ambiguity in how people could define things differently. One of the biggest things to point out is that the whole point of the pre-plumbing and pre-wiring ordinances is to remove barriers for residents' future installation of solar renewable energy systems. So we're not requiring them to put on solar photovoltaic for solar hot water, but by having the new residences prepped to do that, we're going to drive down the cost for installation, we're going to drive down the complexity of installation, and really stream down the process for them. So the real point of this chapter and making these changes is to remove barriers and actively encourage the expansion of renewable energy systems in the community.

Commissioner Ulloa questioned how much it might cost a builder to add these changes to a house. Manager Reed responded that when the building officials took the measure to Council in January, they estimated less than \$100.

Vice Chair Gilgun asked why it was so expensive to get a permit for a solar water heater, stating that it's only \$45 for solar energy, but \$300 for a solar water heater. Director Meacham responded that it's probably still based on valuation—the cost of the project itself, and that Council did not make that determination, and that if wasn't requested at the time to subsidize

that process like it was for solar electricity. Vice Chair Gilgun asked if that was something this commission could discuss at a later date so they could encourage people to get solar hot water. Director Meacham responded that we could do some research and contact other cities in San Diego County and talk to the solar hot water organizations and find out how many California cities have done something similar—find out what their typical charge has been, and then ask the building officials to give us some review about what that flatline subsidy cost would be to the City. We could then bring that information back to the commission.

Commissioner Rahimzadeh asked if the \$45 permit fee on solar energy was a subsidized fee. Director Meacham responded that it was and gave some of the details and history behind the permit structure.

Environmental Resource Manager Reed corrected the previous \$300 figure given for the cost of solar water heater permits to the correct amount of \$350.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Mosolgo made a motion to adopt Chapter 20 Ordinance Solar Amendments. Vice Chair Gilgun seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMENTS**

- SDG&E Summer Saver Program

Environmental Resource Manager Reed gave a briefing on a program SDG&E offers for residences and businesses where SDG&E will install a wireless device on an air conditioning system and residences and businesses agree to allow SDG&E to cycle their air conditioners on and off on peak energy days. They can cycle their systems either by 50% or 100%. In exchange for participating in the program, customers will receive a bill credit at the end of the year, which can range from \$25 to \$184 depending on whether they sign up for 100% or 50% cycling, and on the size of the air conditioning system. Staff is actively recruiting community members to sign up for the program.

Commissioner Rahimzadeh commented that he found it rather biased toward those who chose from the beginning to have fans in their house rather than air conditioning. He said that there was no incentive to encourage responsible behavior from the beginning.

Commissioner Cory asked if it was bad for the compressor to have a mechanism that turns an air conditioning system off and on more than usual. She asked if it wears out faster under these conditions. Director Meacham responded that SDG&E tells them no. Other commissioners added that the compressor cycles off and on by itself anyway.

Commissioner Ulloa asked how the program would affect someone who might only use their air conditioning minimally. Director Meacham responded that the program is not based on usage, but on the load that one could generate—on capacity, not on usage. So someone using their air conditioner minimally would benefit the most economically, but that is not the sole or primary goal of the program.

- Solar RFP

We have been working with the Finance and Public Works Departments and put together a list of every property in the City of Chula Vista. We have about 1 million square feet of roof space, and 1.4 million square feet of parking lot space. We've had thirteen professional, qualified respondents to the program, and part of our enthusiasm to do this at this time is the

economic stimulus package. This will be in the form of a block grant, and we will be receiving the money the first of October. As soon as we receive the funds, we will be using one or two of these companies to put solar on city property. There is a policy that says all new and remodeled projects of the city of 10,000 square feet or more must have a proposal to put solar on-site. The City's overall goal is to have a least twenty percent of the City's facilities' total electric demand on renewable energy by 2012, forty percent by 2020, and then one hundred percent if we can purchase it through something like Community Choice Aggregation.

Director Meacham stated that some of the important conditions in the RFP were 1) Reducing the City's carbon footprint by maximizing cost effective transition for fossil fuel renewable energy, 2) reducing the City's General Fund cost as soon as possible, and 3) at least one option has to cost \$3 million or less in a simple pay back period of less than 10 years. He added that they included an element to foster a stronger community economically and environmentally. That element asked respondents to demonstrate partnerships by buying supplies and materials from local businesses, creating manufacturing jobs, creating quality jobs and training, working with Sweetwater Union High School District and Southwestern College, and by demonstrating an effort to reduce their corporate carbon footprint and any environmental benefits unique to their agency. Director Meacham then discussed some of the measures respondents had indicated they would use to meet these conditions.

Commissioner Rahimzadeh asked what time period would be involved from the time we contracted to the full build-out. Director Meacham responded that we want to award the contract before October 1<sup>st</sup>, and have the solar installed by December 31<sup>st</sup>, which would allow savings to start accruing to the City as early as February 1<sup>st</sup> of next year.

Commissioner Ulloa asked how the City would ensure the companies we chose use the most efficient technology and solar panel systems. Director Meacham responded that the real issue is warranty and what the total cost per watt is.

Commissioner Rahimzadeh mentioned an article he had read about some specific solar technology. In response, Director Meacham discussed details of some of the different types of solar systems.

- Power Plant Update

Director Meacham updated the board on details of potential sites for a new power plant (slides attached). He mentioned that he was taking interested companies on site tours. He also discussed such topics as the prevailing winds and air quality, visual screening of the site, and the handling of habitat disturbance.

- MOU & Negotiations with SDG&E

Director Meacham stated that most of the items they're negotiating with SDG&E on involve infrastructure and costs related to how they treat the City and Chula Vista. He added that one of the more minor things they thought was important that was added was finding more park sites on the west. What SDG&E agreed to was that we could use one site west of 805, at no cost to the City, for a park, and that they would contribute up to \$375,000 in services or financial support to help establish that park. That check should be received some time within the next 30 days.

Three or four primary sites will be presented. One of the top three sites, behind the Orange/4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Library, has been worked up as an example of what the program that would fit would look like on that site. Director Meacham discussed some of the details of that site example.

Commissioner Cory stated that she thought it would be great to have something built on that easement because of all the dry grass there and the possibility of a fire hazard. She stated additionally that it would be a positive to replace the non-native plants that are currently there.

**CHAIR COMMENTS**

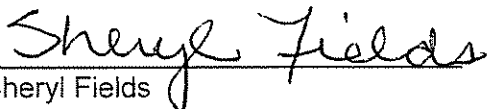
None

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m. to a regular meeting on Monday, July 27, 2009, at 4:00 pm in Council Chambers, 276 F Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910.

Prepared by:



Sheryl Fields  
Sr. Secretary